



For Immediate Release

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American Red Cross Recognizes East Hartford with Emergency Preparedness Award

(March 10, 2015) **East Hartford, CT** – The American Red Cross has recognized Mayor Marcia A. Leclerc and the Town of East Hartford for the work they have done to become the “model” for emergency preparedness in the state of Connecticut.

On March 20, at 7:30 a.m., at the Hartford Marriott Downtown on 200 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT, the Mayor will be the recipient of the 2015 Community Resilience Hero Award. The Mayor will be one of five recipients receiving awards that day, and East Hartford will be the only town being recognized at the 16th Annual Community Heroes Breakfast in Hartford.

Mayor Leclerc, after getting word of receiving the award, attributed the town’s recognition as a sign of the work that has been done under her administration since the Halloween Storm of 2011.

“The strength of our teamwork was evident with Chief John Oates as our Incident Manager, along with the capable support of Public Works Director Tim Bockus, Finance Director Mike Walsh, Corp. Counsel Scott Chadwick, Assistant Corp. Counsel Richard Gentile, Director of Health and Social Services Jim Cordier, C.E.R.T., and a host of community volunteers who distributed over 100,000 readymade meals,” Mayor Leclerc said.

During the Halloween Storm of 2011, wet, heavy snow took out trees and power lines, leaving East Hartford without power for a week. In response, Mayor Leclerc opened the Emergency Operations Center and appointed Fire Chief John Oates as Incident Manager. During the power outages, the EOC was opened for a week and emergency shelters were opened at the High School, at Town Hall and Fire Station 5.

In the award notification, the American Red Cross cited a multitude of different aspects that made the Mayor and the Town of East Hartford the best candidates for the award.

“The Town of East Hartford has done outstanding work in creating programs that support citizens and the community to be better prepared in times of emergency. From the focus on training East Hartford CERT members, to participation in the statewide drill and activation of their Regional shelter, the town has placed importance on preparedness,” the award notification stated. “The city also partnered with the Red Cross in the filming of a preparedness video for the deaf and hearing impaired community. These are just a few of the many ways the city has shown its commitment to building a stronger and safer community.”

Melissa Fazzio, Manager, Resource Development, American Red Cross, Connecticut & Rhode Island Region, said that not only is the town well-prepared, but their preparations have set them apart from every other town in the state.

“If there was a situation, East Hartford has such a strong infrastructure in place that they could respond to any situation and they would be in a good place, because of the programs and preparations they have in place,” Fazzio said. “East Hartford is really a model for the state and different towns in terms of emergency preparedness.”

Mayor Leclerc took the award as a badge of honor for the town and her hard work, which will continue to evolve in order to protect the citizens of East Hartford.

“Since 2011, steps have been taken that have brought the town to the forefront of emergency preparedness,” Mayor Leclerc said. “I will continue on my work in order to completely safeguard our community from any natural disaster.”

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